

TYNDALLISM.

Interview with Dr. C. M. O'Leary, of
Manhattan College.

Catholic Opinion on the New Excitement
About an Old Discussion.

Yesterday afternoon a HERALD reporter called Dr. C. M. O'Leary, at Manhattan College, to obtain his views on Tyndalism. It may be remembered that the Doctor gathered thunderbolts around his devoted head at Albany two years ago when he read a paper entitled "The Ethical Aspects of Modern Science," in which Huxley, Darwin and Mill were dissected with the keen scalpel of Catholic theology. At the time the Doctor was the

A Catholic theologian in the Convocation, and hours he answered the arguments put forward against the premises taken and the conclusion arrived at in his paper. In the interview below it can be seen that the Doctor's views are severely Catholic, and that he has given the subject much attention. According to him Tyndalism is nothing new, for the differences between his doctrine, lately announced, and those of Leucippus and Epicurus are very slight.

"To a thorough understanding of the question
issue between Christian theology and the

And this philosophy has endured within the last thirty years as individualism. The frame of mind in which Tyndal asserted the supremacy of matter was not the growth of a doctrine, the result of individual speculations, but dated back to the time of the Renaissance, when the great scientists of Locke in England, Spinoza in Germany and Comenius in France gave rise to the modern scientific method. They sought for their origin in the senses and laid the foundation of materialism by making the intellect the slave of the senses. They believed that matter, while admitting his belief in the spirituality of the soul, at the same time came due to matter the possibility of producing thought. Comenius made a subtle and elaborate operations of the mind on the simple sensations, while Voltaire clearly expressed the same doctrine in his famous words, *Je pense et je suis corp, je n'en suis qu'un dérivé*.¹⁵

When Tyndal asserted the supremacy of matter before Tyndal, and how did they seek to establish an identity between I and spirit?¹⁶

went," said the Doctor, "De La Metrie, Helvetius and D'Holbach, in various ways, expressed their belief in the identity of spirit and matter—it led to their conclusion, however, by what may be called the physical logic

forces of matter and spirit being united, the whole of the organism became easy. Chemistry and the microscope poured fresh light on the puzzling relation between mind and body. Digestion, respiration, circulation, and the other functions which had hitherto been considered vital, were shown to take place in accordance with the laws of chemistry and physics. The life of the body. Nerve power began to be understood, thanks to the experiments of Flourens, Bichat and Brown, cerebral functions were localized, the functions of the senses were explained, and the main principles of psychology, and to admit nothing which did not survive the tests of its methods of inquiry. Not only did the sciences of the life of the body deliberately asserted that the admission of the existence of the soul as a distinct principle was inadmissible, but they also began to encroach on it; it circumscribed the field of physiological research by assuming the existence of that which should not be investigated by chemical and physiological methods. The sciences of the life of the body at which was discovered gave forth the light by which the undiscovered was to be sought out. The progress of the sciences of the life of the body developed from cells, which reach maturity in different ways; that peculiarity of induction de-

... on special modes of development, giving rise to differences of organization. Here presented itself the tempting analogy of referring all organizations to a primitive homogeneous cell and of simplifying the complex and elaborate

growth of a primordial molecule. Thus the genesis of thought and the manifold phenomena of the physical world were assumed without an attempt at demonstration. A constant employment of a rigid logic of observation and ex-

employment of a rigid logic of observation and experience led Lyndal to the rejection of all that did not respond to his favorite methods, and, while it set the condition of scientific truth on a firmer basis, it opened the way to numberless theories,

"Then I am to understand you as saying that materialism rejects all that does not appear clear and undeniable to you? Is this your favorite method—experience and observation?"

"Exactly so," responded the Doctor. "This new base of materialism is what, day in, truth be

lled a madness of method. It would destroy
ee will, moral responsibility and the hope of a
ture state of existence in order to satisfy a one-
ed logical aspiration. It was born in the at-
embers of an experience much broader than

devoted itself enthusiastically to the consideration of a special series of truths ascertainable by special procedure it is irresistibly inclined to apply the same method with reference to truths not coming within the scope of its vocation. To a mind thus subjectively constituted nothing is admissible but what conforms

the tests it is accustomed to apply, and this logical consistency men of the Tyndall and Huxley type claim for themselves in wishing to omit every question to the probabon of ex-

teenth century, who, utterly ignoring the laws of physical investigation, filled their books with the jargon of "vital forces," "virtues," "nature abhors a vacuum," &c. Even Descartes, whose speculations on metaphysics cannot be overestimated, fell into ridiculous errors when treating of purely physical matters. A few would that

an exclusive application of the mind to any
 one phase of truth not only excites prejudices, but
 a measure incapacitates it for the study of
 other truths by shutting from view the proper in-

"There seems among the orthodox folk to be some difficulty in answering the arguments of Huxley. How do you think they can best be met?"

"Well, if the advocates of the existence of a principle of action in man essentially distinct from the mind, or from the vital force, will but enter the arena with minds stored with the established deductions of recent physiology and psychology, they will be able to stand squarely. The reassertion of the principle of design is but an indirect reply to Huxley's materialism. The issue must be met in the plain, simple, and direct manner, and the serious consequences of the new doctrines, but an assertion must be cited, the assumed separation of the mind from the body, the inevitable error be insisted upon of endeavoring to subject special test-trials which, in the nature of things, are excluded from their operation. Huxley's materialism is a direct and inevitable

which generates thought and sensation through the nervous tissue, being led unquestionably to the supposition by the observation that all organs originate in cells, with which the special

ctrine in possession, as the casuists say. But whenever a theory is advanced in conflict with a universal belief on which the hopes of thousands depend, which is all momentous to the interests of society since it lies at the root of the doctrine of moral responsibility, that belief must be proved denubly erroneous. Hence, therefore, attack-

ing so vital a doctrine by the advancement of an
 diverse theory its claims should be clearly dis-
 covered. Tyndall sneers at the notion of a soul,
 and forthwith proceeds to theorize. So far the

spans the most cherished center of mankind's hopes. Still the interests of that belief must be one the less protected against the indirect assaults of its opponents, even under the injustice of the circumstances. The radical hault the new school, committed, as I said, through the application of a wrong method, has brought up at the emergency.

the rejection of the supersensible. However much they may be pushed for an explanation of the causation of a first molecule they will admit to cause beyond, since such a cause is not discernible by the senses. Matter is eternal.

reason of its existence; in a word it is God in the richest sense, if we admit the principles of Professor Tyndall. The crude views of Epicurus and Lucretius, who attributed the variety, beauty and harmony of the universe to the chance collision of atoms, does not differ much from Tyndall's angenic cell, which is a curious illustration of

The Doctor has delivered a lecture to the Seniors of the College, in which the ideas enunciated by him in the interview were more elaborately set